

Message Twelve

**Spiritual Principles, Life Lessons, and Holy Warnings  
concerning the Enjoyment of the Good Land  
Seen with Five Major Figures in 1 and 2 Samuel**

Scripture Reading: 1 Sam. 2:27-30, 35; 3:21; 12:3-5, 23;  
18:1-4; 23:16-18; 9:1-2, 17; 13:13-14; 15:19, 23; 16:1, 12-13;  
30:6b-10; 26:19b; 2 Sam. 11:1-27

**I. Under Eli the old Aaronic priesthood had become stale and waning (1 Sam. 2:12-30), and God desired to have a new beginning for the accomplishing of His economy:**

- A. We all need to reject anything of staleness, oldness, lukewarmness, and pride and keep ourselves empty, open, fresh, new, living, and young with the Lord; we need to be one with His desire for us to be one with Christ, filled with Christ, and occupied by Christ to live Christ for the organic building up of the Body of Christ—Rev. 3:15-22; Luke 18:17; Phil. 3:7-14; Gal. 1:15-16; 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 4:16.
- B. In the days of Eli the word of God was rare; God’s speaking was almost lost (1 Sam. 3:1); in the priesthood the first thing that a priest should do is to speak for God (Exo. 28:30); a priest must be a person who is intimate with God, who is one with God, who knows the heart of God, and who speaks forth the unique and healthy teaching of God’s eternal economy (1 Tim. 1:3-4; 6:3).
- C. Eli taught Samuel to say to the Lord, “Speak, O Jehovah; for Your servant is listening”; in order to speak for the Lord and be one with Him to carry out His eternal economy, we must first treasure and listen attentively to His speaking so that we may know His desire and preference—1 Sam. 3:9-10, 21; Isa. 50:4-5.
- D. Eli disregarded the priesthood in his loose disciplining of his two evil sons (1 Sam. 2:28-29); this caused the tragedy of the ending of his history, the termination of his enjoyment of the good land, and the fading of the priesthood in the divine revelation, that is, in the speaking for God; today we need to learn of Eli to have a high regard for what God has given us in His recovery.

**II. Samuel was faithful to God in all his God-given statuses and offices:**

- A. As a Levite, he served God his whole life; as a Nazarite, he kept his consecration without failure (v. 35); as a priest-prophet, he spoke for God honestly and initiated the prophethood to replace the fading priesthood in the divine revelation; as a judge, he was

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faithful to God and just to the people, terminating the judgeship and bringing in the kingship in order to change the age for the fulfillment of God's economy.

- B. As one who worked together with God for the carrying out of His economy (John 5:17; 2 Cor. 6:1a), Samuel was established as a prophet of Jehovah to speak for Him by listening to His word (1 Sam. 3:9-10, 20-21); we need to continually exercise ourselves to have an ear to "hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7); furthermore, we need to follow the pattern of Mary, who "sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word" (Luke 10:38-42):
1. Mary sat at the feet of the *Lord Jesus* and not at the feet of anyone else; no method is better than coming to Him moment by moment, loving Him, worshipping Him, and unceasingly fellowshiping with Him and remaining in His presence.
  2. Mary sat *at the feet* of the Lord; she put herself in a humble position in order to hear the Lord's speaking and receive His blessing; humility is not belittling ourselves; humility is ignoring ourselves, negating ourselves, and considering ourselves as nothing.
  3. She was *sitting down*; those who are busy to the point of being distracted from the Lord's presence have a wandering mind and vacillating thoughts; they must stop themselves in order to spend personal time with the Lord on a daily basis.
  4. She was *listening to the Lord's word*; the words that the Lord speaks to us are spirit and life (John 6:63); her listening to the Lord's word afforded the Lord the opportunity to communicate Himself to her and to dispense Himself into her so that she could gain the Lord Himself.
- C. Samuel enjoyed his portion of the good land to the fullest for his whole life; thus, in a New Testament sense, we can say that there was no defect in his enjoyment of Christ; the only defect in Samuel's history was that he appointed his two sons as judges among the children of Israel—1 Sam. 8:1-3:
1. The unjust ways of Samuel's sons were contrary to their father's pure and just way in his whole life (12:3-5, 23) and gave the people of Israel cause to ask Samuel to appoint a king to judge them like all the nations (8:1-7); hence, the sons of Samuel should not be reckoned judges among the people of Israel (Acts 13:20), and their father Samuel should be considered the last judge.

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2. Humanly, Samuel made a mistake in this matter, but this mistake helped God to manage the situation among His people by bringing in the kingship for the fulfillment of His economy.

### **III. Jonathan loved David, made a covenant with him, and predicted that David would become the king and that the kingdom would be his kingdom—1 Sam. 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:8, 14-17, 41-42; 23:16-18:**

- A. Saul's intention was to preserve the kingdom for Jonathan; however, Jonathan was not willing to take the kingdom but recognized that David should be on the throne.
- B. Jonathan should have told his father about this and then should have left his father to be with David; in typology, for Jonathan to follow David would have signified our following Christ today and our giving Him the preeminence—Col. 1:18b; Rev. 2:4.
- C. Jonathan lost the proper and adequate enjoyment of his portion in the good land promised by God because of his failure in not following David according to God's will due to his natural affection for his father; although Jonathan realized that David would be king, he stayed with his father, and as a tragic result, he suffered the same fate as his father and died with him in battle—1 Sam. 31:2-6.
- D. Jonathan stood between Saul and David; he was one man standing between two ministries; he should have followed the second ministry, but because his relationship with the first ministry was too deep, he could not disentangle himself:
  1. In every age the Lord has special things that He wants to accomplish; He has His own recoveries and His own works to do; the particular recovery and work that He does in one age is the ministry of that age—cf. Gen. 6:13-14.
  2. David was a minister of his age with the ministry of that age (Acts 13:21-22, 36a); in the Old Testament, Noah had the ministry of that age to build the ark, Moses had the ministry of that age to build the tabernacle, and David and Solomon had the ministry of that age to build the temple.
  3. A minister of the age with the ministry of the age is different from the local ministers; Luther was a minister of his age, and Darby was also a minister of his age; in order to catch up with the ministry of this present age, there is the need for us to see

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the vision; Michal was married to David, yet she did not see anything; she only saw David's outward condition, and she could not tolerate it; as a result, she was left behind—2 Sam. 6:16, 20-23.

4. In the New Testament, the ministry of the Lord Jesus is to build up the church as the Body of Christ (Matt. 16:18); the many gifted persons produced in the Lord's ascension have only one ministry, that is, to minister Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ, the church; this building up is not accomplished directly by the gifted ones but by the saints who have been perfected by the gifted ones (Eph. 4:11-12, 16).
5. In God's building ministry there are those who take the lead in that ministry in every age; may the Lord open our eyes to see that as long as we are human beings, we should be Christians; as long as we are Christians, we should enter into the Lord's ministry in this age.
6. It is God's mercy that a person can see and come into contact with the ministry of the age, yet it is altogether a different thing for a person to take up the courage to forsake past ministries and enter into God's present ministry—cf. 1 Sam. 14:1-46; 2 Sam. 6:16, 20-23.
7. The ministry of the age ministers the present truth to God's people; in 2 Peter 1:12 *the present truth* can also be rendered "the up-to-date truth"; every worker of the Lord should inquire before God as to what the present truth is—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:15-16; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-29; 3:5, 12, 21; Psa. 48:2; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2.

**IV. Saul was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel to be the king of Israel—1 Sam. 9:1-2, 17; 10:1, 24:**

- A. Saul disobeyed God's word at least twice so that he lost his kingship and his kingdom (13:13-14; 15:19, 23; 28:17-19); when Saul disobeyed God in 1 Samuel 15, he actually rebelled against Him.
- B. In this chapter Samuel told Saul, "Rebellion is like the sin of divination, / And insubordination is like idolatry and teraphim" (v. 23a); to practice divination is to have contact with evil spirits; what Saul did in rebelling against God was like this sin of divination; he was not subordinate to God and in fact became an enemy to God; as a result, he lost his kingship.

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- C. Saul's tragic end was altogether due to his not being properly related to God's economy; God, wanting to build up His kingdom among His chosen people, had brought Saul into His economy, but instead of participating in God's economy and cooperating with it, Saul was selfish and usurped God's kingdom to build up his own monarchy; he was filled with thoughts of the kingship, including thoughts about how his son would succeed him—20:31.
  - D. In this, Saul was selfish and wrong to the uttermost; eventually, God gave Saul up and cut him off, tearing the kingdom away from him (15:28); because Saul was given up by God, he was left alone, like an orphan, having no provision of help when trouble came.
  - E. Because of Saul's selfishness, the people of Israel suffered defeat and were slaughtered in the fight against the Philistines, and Saul and his sons were killed; Saul's ambition to have the kingdom for himself and for his son, with his jealousy of David, confiscated and ended his enjoyment of the good land promised by God—20:30-34.
  - F. The collective death of Saul, his three sons, and his armor bearer was God's fair judgment on the one who had rebelled against Him, had usurped Him, and had become His enemy (1 Chron. 10:13-14); from Saul's tragic end we should learn the lesson of crucifying our flesh and denying our selfishness—our self-interest and self-seeking (Gal. 5:24; Matt. 16:24; Phil. 2:3).
  - G. The record of Saul's terrible end is a strong warning to all who serve in the kingdom of God not to do a separate work within the kingdom of God or to abuse anything in the kingdom; we should not be like Saul, trying to build up a "monarchy" for ourselves; rather, we should all do one unique work to build up the kingdom of God, the Body of Christ—1 Sam. 31:1-13.
- V. David was chosen and anointed by God through Samuel to be the king of Israel—16:1, 12-13:**
- A. After David slew Goliath, he was praised by the women of Israel as higher than Saul (18:7), but with David there is no hint that he was made proud or that he became ambitious for the kingship; when David was under the trial of Saul's persecution, he was approved to be the right one to carry out God's economy by establishing the kingdom of God on earth.

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- B. When David was under Saul's persecution, he had two chances to destroy Saul, but David would not do this because of his fear of God in that Saul was God's anointed; this indicates that David maintained a good order in God's kingdom—chs. 24 and 26; cf. Rom. 12:3.
- C. No doubt, David learned a lot regarding not avenging himself but denying himself for the fulfilling of God's purpose, on the basis that he was a man according to God's heart—1 Sam. 13:14a.
- D. David is a typical model of a genuine child of Israel in the enjoyment of the good land promised and given by God to His chosen people; he trusted in God and walked with God according to His sovereignty and according to His leading and instruction in all his trials; David expected to remain in the good land, sharing in God's inheritance and serving Him—17:36-37; 23:14-16; 30:6b-10; 26:19b.
- E. David's sincere trust in God and his faithful walk with God qualified him fully to enjoy the good land to a high level, even up to the kingship according to God's heart with a kingdom that became the kingdom of God on the earth; David was one with God; what was his was God's, and what was God's was his; he and God had only one kingdom; such a one enjoyed the good land, typifying Christ, to the uttermost.
- F. After the death of Saul, "there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; but David became continually stronger, and the house of Saul became continually weaker" (2 Sam. 3:1); David was established by God as king with his kingdom exalted for the sake of God's people Israel (5:6-25); furthermore, "David became greater and greater; and Jehovah the God of hosts was with him" (v. 10); this indicates that David had God's presence.
- G. If in any matter we do not have the inner sense that the Lord is with us, we must be careful and reconsider our way (1 Sam. 16:14); in the Lord's recovery, whenever we do anything, we must take care of the sense of the Lord's presence; we all need to learn the lesson of caring for two things: the inward presence of God and the outward confirmation in our environment (cf. 2 Sam. 5:11-12).
- H. Furthermore, we all need to learn of David on the negative side as well as on the positive side; the lust of the flesh is a devastating element that can destroy us; if such a godly man as David could

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be seduced, how can we escape?—11:1-27; cf. 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Cor. 6:13, 18:

1. Regardless of our attainment in our spiritual pursuit, it is possible for any of us to commit such a sin; we should read this account seriously in the presence of God; this account warns us that the indulgence of the flesh is a serious thing; David was tempted simply by a glance, and then he failed to restrict himself.
2. All the saints, especially the young ones, should search their hearts and make a strong resolution of heart never to go the way of the indulgence of the flesh (Judg. 5:15-16); we need to say, “Lord Jesus, I love You, I need You, and I receive You”; if we say this, He will be our Savior and our dynamic salvation; as the pneumatic Christ, He will save us, preserve us, and protect us from the contamination of this age, so that we may keep the glory that we have attained.